

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 00616

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: DIALOGUE WITH PSOE ON DEFENSE ISSUES
REF: STATE 05274
1. SUMMARY. DURING AN INFORMAL THREE-HOUR EXCHANGE
OF VIEWS WITH TWO OF THE PSOE'S EXPERTS ON DEFENSE
POLICY, THE PSOE SPECIALISTS REITERATED THE PARTY'S
OPPOSITION TO NATO MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR THE
CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN ARMED FORCE.
AS THE FIRST STEP IN THAT DIRECTION, THEY FORESAW
BILATERAL SPANISH DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS WITH VARIOUS
WEST EUROPEAN GOVTS, COMBINED WITH SOME SORT OF
CONTINUING DEFENSE TIE WITH THE US, BUT WITHOUT
RENEWAL OF THE PRESENT BASE ARRANGEMENTS WHEN THESE
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EXPIRE IN 1981. THERE WAS PRESENT ON THE PART OF THE
PSOE DEFENSE SPOKESMAN (SOLANA) AN OBVIOUS INTEREST
IN DEVELOPING SOON A "SHADOW" DEFENSE POLICY CAPABLE
OF IMPLEMENTATION SHOULD THE PSOE COME TO POWER.
WHILE THE BASIC THRUST OF THE PSOE VIEWS WAS FAMILIAR,
THE EXCHANGE WAS HELPFUL AND WILL BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER
PERIODIC, INFORMAL GET-TOGETHERS. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFFS MET INFORMALLY JANUARY 10 WITH PSOE DEPUTY LUIS SOLANA, THE PARTY'S LEADING DEFENSE EXPERT, AND FORMER ARMY MAJOR JULIO BUSQUETS, PSOE DEPUTY FROM BARCELONA AND A MEMBER OF SOLANA'S SMALL GROUP OF DEFENSE SPECIALISTS, AT SOLANA'S INITIATIVE IN WHAT WE AGREED WOULD BE THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF EXCHANGES ON A BROAD RANGE OF DEFENSE QUESTIONS. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ALMOST THREE-HOUR SESSION FOLLOW:

3. AT THE OUTSET, EMBOFFS STRESSED THAT, WHILE THE US SUPPORTED SPANISH NATO MEMBERSHIP, WE WERE NOT IN ANY WAY APPLYING PRESSURE ON THE ISSUE. CLEARLY SPAIN'S DECISION ON ITS DEFENSE ORIENTATION GENERALLY HAD TO FLOW FROM A SERIOUS, OBJECTIVE AND COMPLETE THREAT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF THE COUNTRY'S RESULTING SECURITY NEEDS AND SOMETHING APPROACHING A NATIONAL CONSENSUS WAS THE NECESSARY BASIS FOR DEFENSE POLICY. EMBOFFS CONTINUED THAT, WHILE WE OBVIOUSLY BROUGHT OUR OWN PREJUDICES TO SUCH QUESTIONS, WE ALSO BELIEVED THE PSOE, AS THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF LONG YEARS IN CLANDESTINITY, TENDED TO ENTERTAIN SOMEWHAT IMPRACTICAL NOTIONS ON FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE ISSUES. WE AGREED THAT A CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF THIS NATURE WOULD BE MUTUALLY HELPFUL.

4. IN RESPONSE, SOLANA SAID THAT THE PSOE HAD A GREAT DEAL TO LEARN. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE PARTY WAS SEARCHING FOR A MEANS OF WORKING TOWARD ITS GOAL OF CONFIDENTIAL

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A UNIFIED EUROPEAN ARMED FORCE INDEPENDENT OF THE TWO GREAT NUCLEAR POWERS, WHILE ALSO BEING RESPONSIBLE TO THE WEST'S -- THEREFORE ALSO TO THE U.S.'S -- BASIC DEFENSE NEEDS IN SPAIN. HE REITERATED THE PARTY'S OPPOSITION TO NATO MEMBERSHIP, BUT FORESAW BILATERAL SPANISH DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS WITH VARIOUS WEST EUROPEAN GOVTS (HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY GERMANY) AND A CONTINUED BILATERAL DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP (UNDERLINED) WITH THE US. (SEE OUR MEMCON OF DECEMBER 15, 1977 FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SOLANA'S VIEWS.)

5. IN RESPONSE TO NUMEROUS QUESTIONS ON THE PART OF BOTH SOLANA AND BUSQUETS, EMBOFFS PROVIDED THEM WITH BASIC INFORMATION ON THE TREATY RELATIONSHIP AND ON US ACTIVITIES AT THE JOINT-USE BASES. MUCH OF THIS CLEARLY WAS NEW TO THEM AND THEY SEEMED GRATEFUL FOR A PRESENTATION THEY OBVIOUSLY HAD NOT SUCCEEDED IN ELICITING FROM THEIR OWN MILITARY. BOTH REHEARSED THE PSOE'S POSITION ON US BASE RIGHTS, I.E., OPPOSITION IN PRINCIPLE, BUT A STRONG INCLINATION TO POSTPONE ADDRESSING THE ISSUE UNTIL THE DEBATE ON RENEWAL IN 1980-81. THEY SEEMED TO HOLD OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME CONTINUED US MILITARY PRESENCE AFTER 1981, BUT, AT THIS STAGE WHEN THEIR

CONCENTRATION IS ON THE IDEA OF WORKING TOWARD A EUROPEAN DEFENSE FORCE, THIS MAY HAVE BEEN THEIR WAY OF TESTING WHETHER THIS MIGHT PROVE AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SPANISH ENTRY INTO NATO. BUSQUETS SAW SUCH A CONTINUATION AS A POSSIBLE MEANS OF FINALLY GETTING THE US TO "PAY" FOR WHAT THESE BASE RIGHTS REALLY WERE WORTH TO US. IN RESPONSE, EMBOFFS STRESSED THAT THE US CONGRESS WAS UNLIKELY TO BE IN ANY MOOD TO PAY A WESTERN EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY FOR BASING FACILITIES, BELIEVING INSTEAD THAT THE OBJECTIVE MUST BE A PARTNER-

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SHIP BASED ON A SHARED VIEW OF DEFENSE INTERESTS. NATO MEMBERSHIP WOULD BE THE LOGICAL REFLECTION OF THIS.

6. RETURNING TO THE QUESTION OF A NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE THREAT TO SPAIN, SOLANA AGREED THAT SUCH AN EXERCISE HAD HARDLY EVEN BEGUN, AND HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES EVEN WITHIN THE PSOE'S SMALL DEFENSE GROUP OVER THE NATURE OF THE THREAT. SOLANA, FOR HIS PART, SAW THE "THREAT" FROM SOVIET STRATEGIC WEAPONS GROWING, BUT THE "RISK" OF THEIR ACTUAL USE DECREASING; BOTH HE AND BUSQUETS MINIMIZED ANY DIRECT SOVIET THREAT TO SPAIN AND THEY OBVIOUSLY

HAD ONLY A SUPERFICIAL UNDERSTANDING, AT BEST, OF THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A MILITARY IMBALANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. THEY WERE HIGHLY SKEPTICAL THAT GROWING SOVIET MILITARY MIGHT COULD EFFECTIVELY CONDITION A NON-CONFIDENTIAL

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NATO SPAIN'S FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS. EVEN MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, NEITHER SOLANA NOR BUSQUETS UNDERSTOOD THE INDIVISIBILITY OF WEETERN DEFENSE: BUSQUETS REPEATEDLY INSISTED THAT US BASE RIGHTS IN SPAIN WERE ONLY TO PROTECT THE US AND BOTH SEEMED EITHER UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO GRASP THE ROLE PLAYED BY US SPANISH-BASED ACTIVITIES IN THE WESTERN DEFENSE EFFORT GENERALLY.

7. AS FOR NATO, SOLANA AND BUSQUETS OBVIOUSLY BELIEVED THAT THE COLD WAR CONDITIONS WHICH BROUGHT THE ALLIANCE INTO BEING NO LONGER OBTAINED, AND THAT IN ANY CASE CENTRAL EUROPE WAS A LONG WAY FROM SPAIN. EMBOFFS POINTED OUT THAT NATO WAS THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COMMON MARKET COIN, AS THE ONLY DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT AND THE MOST EFFECTIVE FORUM FOR POLITICAL/MILITARY DIALOGUE FOR THE MEMBER COUNTRIES. MOREOVER, SOLANA'S CONTINUED ASSURANCES TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING (SEE, FOR INSTANCE, MADRID 77-0042), WE BELIEVED THE PSOE'S EUROPEAN SOCIALIST FRIENDS DID NOT ACCEPT THE PARTY'S DEFENSE LINE BUT ALSO DID NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO BE PRESSURING THE PARTY AND THEREFORE DID NOT PURSUE THE ISSUE. (SOLANA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT, AT LEAST IN THE CASE OF THE GERMANS, THERE HAD BEEN EXPRESSED DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PSOE'S DEFENSE ORIENTATION.)

8. WE ALSO EMPHASIZED TO SOLANA THAT, WHILE THE PSOE'S DESIRE FOR A UNITED EUROPEAN DEFENSE WAS LAUDABLE -- WE TOO, AFTER ALL, SUPPORTED EUROPEAN UNITY -- THE PARTY'S EUROPEAN COUNTERPARTS HAD WRESTLED WITH THIS PROBLEM FOR YEARS AND ALWAYS CAME BACK TO THE SAME CONCLUSIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, GERMANS WOULD INEVITABLY DOMINATE SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT, SOMETHING AS UNACCEPTABLE TO THEM AS TO THE SOVIETS; CONSEQUENTLY, THERE WAS FOR THEM NO REAL ALTERNATIVE TO THE PARTICIPATION OF THE US. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE SPANISH DECISION SHOULD REFLECT A CONSCIOUS EVALUATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SPAIN'S PLAYING A MEANINGFUL ROLE IN WESTERN DEFENSE DECISION-MAKING ON MATTERS WHICH DEEPLY AFFECT SPANISH SECURITY. IF SPAIN WANTED TO HAVE SUCH A ROLE, THERE REALLY WAS NO ALTERNATIVE

TO JOINING NATO. SPAIN'S INFLUENCE ON SUCH DECISIONS FROM OUTSIDE THE ALLIANCE WOULD REMAIN SLIGHT. ALTHOUGH BUSQUETS DISMISSED THIS ARGUMENT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE US DOMINATED NATO AND MADE ITS OWN DECISIONS, SOLANA GENERALLY AGREED THAT NATO WAS INDEED A COLLEGIUM AND THAT ALL INTRAMURAL VIEWS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

9. COMMENT: SOLANA'S DEFENSE VIEWS HAVE MATURED CONSIDERABLY IN THE YEAR SINCE WE BEGAN DISCUSSING THESE ISSUES WITH HIM. WE ASSUME THIS IS PRIMARILY THE RESULT OF HIS TRAVELS TO OTHER WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND

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TALKS WITH DEFENSE EXPERTS IN GERMANY, FRANCE AND ELSEWHERE. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN EMBOFF POINTED TO THE INCLUSION IN THE RECENT SOVIET-PSOE COMMUNIQUE -- MADRID 77-10576--OF A REFERENCE TO AGREEMENT THAT ALLIANCES SHOULD NOT BE EXPANDED AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE PSOE'S LACK OF FOREIGN POLICY SOPHISTICATION, SOLANA AGREED, STATING THAT SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IF HE HAD BEEN ALONG ON THE TRIP. BUSQUETS, FOR HIS PART, UNFORTUNATELY COMBINES ALL THE PREJUDICES OF BOTH THE SPANISH MILITARY RIGHT AND THE POLITICAL

LEFT. HE OBVIOUSLY IS NO MATCH FOR SOLANA INTELLECTUALLY,
AND HIS APPROACH TO DEFENSE QUESTIONS TENDS TO BE MUCH
MORE NARROW AND RIGID. STABLER

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